

## FARMERS' ALLIANCE.

How It Drew Many Solons to Their Homes.

### THE BATTLES THAT WERE WAGED

The Committee Rooms Even More Desecrated Than the Chamber of the House—Getting in a Bill.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 13, 1890.—[Special correspondence of THE HERALD.]—Toward the end of July nearly half the members of the House of Representatives were absent from their duties. Storm clouds had unexpectedly appeared in nearly every Congressional district in agricultural sections of the country, south and west. The political sky was ablaze with suggestive premonitions. The Farmers' alliance was at work. In a few districts it had reared like a tornado, overwhelming many Representatives seeking re-election. Republicans and Democrats had been served alike. In other districts it resembled a flood sweeping over river bottoms and carrying everything before it. There were astounding reports from Kansas and reports equally alarming from South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia and the Gulf states. Senators as distinguished as Ingalls and Vance were threatened. There were anxious faces in the House. Experienced veterans heard the whistling of the storm and knew that they were in danger. They paired with men of opposite political faith in equal peril and sped to their districts to look after their political households. In some cases they were too late to save themselves. In others they are still struggling.



SOME FELLOWS DANCE WITH DELIGHT.

The rising of the farmers might apply to the comparison of the rising in the departments of France at the time of the French revolution. Honest legislators, who had never failed in devotion to the agricultural interests of the country, struggled for their political existence. In Georgia there was a violent gale. James H. Blount, of Macon, serving his eighteenth consecutive year in the House, was forced to raise his umbrella. Judge J. D. Stewart was overwhelmed. Tom Grimes and Judge Barnes had only a fighting chance. There were alarming reports concerning the political future of that prince of confederate soldiers, Governor John B. Gordon. The farmers were making the fight for the legislature with the intention of putting one of their own number in the United States Senate in the place of Governor Joe Brown. Governor Gordon had thrown himself into their ranks in the vain hope of securing the prize.

Such were some of the reports that reached the House. In Mississippi such tried veterans as General Hooker, James Bright Morgan, General Catoe and Thomas R. Stockdale were endangered. Brilliant John M. Allen received his renomination before the storm had fairly burst. In Alabama General William T. Forney was threatened. His loss would have been a national loss.

In Kansas, Iowa and Illinois everything is at sea. The political life of Rev. John A. Anderson, of rough and ready Perkins and of pertinacious Funston is at stake. Anderson is a born fighter. His assaults upon the Pacific railroads alone ought to endear him to the farmers. He will be in the field despite all opposition, and if he must go down, will fall like a hero.

Then there was alarming news from South Carolina. The veteran George D. Tillman alone was undismayed. He is a brother of the Tillman who is shaking up the political aristocracy of the Palmetto state, and whose obituary is probably already in type in the composing rooms of more than one daily newspaper.

Wild rumors came from the northwest. The sitting members were not only exposed to the blast of the Farmers' Alliance, but were shaken by a school question that had excited the German Lutherans. This agitation threw the railroads alone ought to endear him to the farmers. He will be in the field despite all opposition, and if he must go down, will fall like a hero.



REV. JOHN A. ANDERSON ASSAULTS THE P. B. R.

All these rumors withered upon the House like a sirocco. It shrunk to the smallest dimensions. The speaker had difficulty in counting a quorum. Many an empty seat tells of the desperate struggle. Both sides find it difficult to keep their lines. Telegrams are received day after day telling of the fortunes of Representatives hundreds and thousands of miles away.

A quorum was found only when a vote was taken upon the most important measures. There were tiresome debates in committee of the whole on the original package, the bankruptcy and other bills. Men spoke to empty seats. The committee on rules kept its grip on the throat of the House. It not only directed what bills should be taken up, but allotted the time for consideration, and specified the hour for voting. Without this specification it would have been almost impossible to have obtained a voting quorum at the critical moment.

There was no chance for the thousands of little bills upon the calendar. These are usually shoved in to fill the interstices of legislation by unanimous consent. The list of bills on the printed calendar toward the end of the month filled three pages. The calendar of the committee of the whole on the state of the union took up twenty-three; the House calendar carried nine, and the pri-

rate calendar was spread over forty-seven pages. There was a page of special orders, five pages of unfinished business, and a page of privileged reports. Over one thousand seven hundred bills remained upon the calendar, only 237 of which were private pension bills.

The laboring men looking for labor legislation, the claimants seeking just dues from the government, and the thousands interested in measures affecting the commerce, agriculture and other business interests of the country, can readily understand why nothing is done to relieve them. The rules, it was said, were made to do business. They do business, but it is the business designated by the committee on rules under the rules. Privileged business eats up much of the time. If through importunity a member secures recognition from the speaker, and asks unanimous consent for the consideration of a bill which takes not a dollar out of the treasury, somebody invariably objects. If, by any accident, the objection is not heard, somebody is sure to raise the point of no quorum when the vote is taken.



QUORUM SECURED BY BRINGING SIGNATURES OF MEMBERS ON BACK OF BILL.

Here is a bill granting fifteen days leave of absence to per diem men in the customs service. The secretary of the treasury favors it. It takes not a cent out of the treasury. All the other employees in this service have leaves of absence for thirty days with pay. They work eight hours a day. These per diem men work in relays from sunrise to sunset and from sunset to sunrise. All are compelled to remain upon duty whether their services are needed or not. In summer importations are not as heavy as in winter. One-fifth of the force might easily be spared for fifteen days. Yet thrice has unanimous consent been asked to consider this bill, and thrice has objection been made. A similar bill affecting postoffice employees has been hanging by the heels for two weeks on a motion to reconsider, entered two days after its passage. No man can get consent to bring up the eight-hour back-pay law, the bill to restore the wages in the government printing office and a score of similar bills placed on the calendar by the committee on labor. It is an ill-tempered House. Senseless objections are made and the point of no quorum raised apparently without reason.

Despite these over-loaded calendars and the absence of over one hundred and fifty members who are skirmishing with the Farmers' Alliance and the Lutheran preachers committees are urged to report bills lately introduced. The committee rooms, however, are ever more deserted than the chamber of the House. Effort after effort is made to secure a quorum in vain. All see that a measure reported at this late hour, unless of vital importance, must fail of consideration. At times the clerk of a committee spends days in searching for enough members to make a quorum. This quorum is frequently secured by bringing their signatures together upon the back of the bill to be reported. Many a poor devil seeking private legislation departs from Washington with a joyful heart after this is done.

Some fellows dance with delight when they secure the introduction of a bill. They think that with the matter thus brought to the attention of Congress the justice of the claim must secure prompt and favorable action. They wait weeks and months and then return to Washington to find the bill dead in the hands of the committee. Days are then spent in importuning members of the committee. At last the claimant is told that his bill will be reported to the House. He fancies that when the bill is reported it will be read, and that every member will listen to the reading. It is used to be so, but it is no longer. The bill is quietly slipped upon the calendar under the new rules. In many cases, the only man who knows any thing about it is the man who reported it. In nineteen cases out of twenty it might as well be buried in the catacombs of Paris, for it will never see daylight unless by a happy combination of circumstances. Upon the calendar it takes its place with thousands of others. Aside from private pension bills, the House that passes three bills a day on an average is doing a great business.

When the seventy-five members to be elected by the Farmers' Alliance take part in the Fifty-second Congress things may be different—better if not worse.

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